

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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P 242135Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8852

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 0479

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EXDIS

FOR ARA

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, ETRD, EFIN, RQ, TD, US

SUBJECT: TRINIDADIAN-PUERTO RICAN CONTACT

REF: PORT OF SPAIN 0396

LETTER DATED 16 FEB 1976 FOR TRANSMITTAL TO PURETO RICO
GOVERNOR HERNANDEZ COLON FROM TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
PRIME MINISTER ERIC
WILLIAMS:

QUOTE YOUR EXCELLENCY,
IN CONFIRMATION OF RECENT EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS
WHICH I HAVE HAD WITH THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF THE
AMERICAN EMBASSY HERE, I WRITE FORMALLY TO INVITE YOU
TO SEND A SMALL TEAM OF OFFICIALS TO RESUME THE PUERTO
RICO-TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO DIALOGUE THAT BEGAN ALMOST A
DECADE AGO AND SEEK TO EXPLORE POSSIBLE AREAS OF CLOSER
COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT DISCUSSIONS ON A COMPACT OF A
PERMANENT UNION BETWEEN PUERTO RICO AND THE UNITED
STATES.

AT THIS MOMENT I WOULD CONFINE MYSELF TO GENERAL
ISSUES RATHER THAN SPECIFIC DETAILS AND SUGGEST THAT THE
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DISCUSSIONS SHOULD EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES IN TERMS OF

TRADE EXCHANGES BASED ON WHAT EACH OF USE WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO DISPOSE OF OR TO ABSORB ON THE BASIS OF MFN PRINCIPLES AND THE UNITED STATES POLICY IN RESPECT OF GSP TREATMENT WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO SECTION 503 OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE ACT OF 1974. I WOULD PROPOSE FURTHER THAT WE TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE QUESTION OF NON-TARIFF BARRIERS AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY INHIBIT OR MIGHT INHIBIT TRADE BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES; WE ARE REFERRING HERE TO QUARANTINE, LABELLING, QUANTITATIVE RESTRICTIONS, CUSTOMS AND PORT PROCEDURES AND CHARGES, TERMS OF SHIPMENT, ETC. FINALLY, AT THIS STAGE WE ARE OF THE OPINION THAT CONSIDERATION SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO THE QUESTION OF TRANSPORT, BOTH BY SEA AND AIR.

I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST THAT IN VIEW OF OUR OWN COMMITMENTS HERE, THE INITIAL MEETING AT THIS STAGE SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN PORT OF SPAIN, SOMEWHERE AROUND THE SECOND WEEK OF MARCH - THAT IS TO SAY, AFTER OUR CARNIVAL SEASON IS OVER. OUR OWN SMALL TEAM WOULD INCLUDE OUR MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE WHO IS IN CHARGE OF ALL MATTERS CONCERNING OUR CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY, AND OUR MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WHO WOULD BE THE AUTHORITY MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, BOTH DIRECTLY AND IN RESPECT OF THE OAS AND THE UNITED NATIONS. THEY WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY APPROPRIATE EXPERTS.

I LEAVE IT TO YOU TO DECIDE ON THE SIZE AND PERSONNEL OF YOUR OWN REPRESENTATIONS, BUT WE WOULD BE MOST HAPPY TO RECEIVE THEM AS THE GUESTS OF THE GOVERNMENT WHILST THEY ARE HERE. OUR THINKING AT THIS MOMENT IS THAT THIS INITIAL EXERCISE OF EXPLORATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIFIC ISSUES WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED IN NOT MORE THAN THREE OR FOUR DAYS.

I AM SENDING A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY HERE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MANY DISCUSSIONS I HAVE HELD WITH HIM ON ITS CONTENTS, AND AS WE HAVE AGREED THAT THIS EXERCISE SHOULD BE CONDUCTED WITH A MINIMUM OF PUBLICITY AT THIS STAGE, I AM ASKING HIM TO FORWARD THIS LETTER TO YOU.

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I TRUST THAT YOU ARE WELL AND I ASK YOU TO ACCEPT THE ASSURANCES OF MY HIGHEST CONSIDERATION. SIGNED ERIC WILLIAMS. END QUOTE.
FAY

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